# Bang Bang Bang 'til My Feet Do the Same by Barkour

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Will Byers met Jane at the Snow Ball.

## Bang Bang Bang 'til My Feet Do the Same

He met Eleven at the Snow Ball, after the long and awkward slow dance. Mike waved him down and tugged her forward by the hand.

At the end of the slow dance the girl Will had danced with said shyly, “Next dance?” with her lashes lowered and her eyes bright. He stuttered then fled. His hands were clammy. He hadn’t known where to look or what to say. The nearness of her face to his had made Will fretful. Jonathan said it was okay to feel like that around girls, but Will had found it unpleasant, not exciting but rather like he was expected to do something but he didn’t know what or why he should do it.

So: Mike called to him and Will went. Of course he did. Mike was holding hands with a thin girl with dark curls and darker eyes. She looked at Mike, as if uncertain, and then turned to look unblinkingly at Will.

Mike said, “Will,” smiling so his teeth showed and his cheeks bunched up. His face was cherry pinked, his eyes pinched. Will’s stomach did flips. “This is Eleven. She came, which is—Really great,” he said to her, “it’s—awesome. That you’re here.”

“Oh,” said Will. He looked away from Mike. He smiled and he knew it to be unsure. “Cool. You’re Eleven?”

The darkness of her eyes was unlike the darkness of Mike’s eyes. Mike had warm eyes, the sort of eyes that had made Will feel like everything would turn out OK, even when He moved like a slow and endless worm through Will’s head. This girl had eyes like the unknowable deepness of space.

The girl looked at Will and said, “Jane,” very softly and without hesitation. “I’m Jane. Hopper.” She said it together then, and as she said it some small thing in her face eased: “Jane Hopper.”

Mike turned again to her. “Hopper? Wait, so, the Chief’s your dad? Or did he, like, adopt you? Wait, does this mean you’ll go to school with us?”

He brightened with each thought. An unexpected sadness moved inside Will. He tried to look away from it. Spangles glittered overhead. Deniece Williams sang joyfully about her baby who didn't dress fine.

Before him, Jane leaned in to kiss Mike on the cheek. Mike startled. She settled on her feet, her lips turned in. She said, still in that soft way, "I want to talk with Will."

"Oh." Mike touched his cheek and looked, oh, both brilliant and let down, his eyelashes dripping and his fingers light on his own skin. "Sure. Um, you guys probably need to talk anyway. I'll wait here."

Jane squeezed his hand. She smiled, and it was as little and certain as the way she spoke. Without saying anything else, she turned from Mike to Will and then walked beyond him.

"Um," Will said, looking back to Mike, "sure. I. Okay." He followed her to a corner at the bleachers, hidden beneath the arcing blue and white balloons.

Jonathan was on the far side of the gymnasium, photographing Nancy and Dustin, who grinned hugely. A group of girls, each with their hair tied up high and force-curled, passed the bleachers, away from Will and Jane. He glanced again over his shoulder at Mike, standing alone by the tables, looking back at them: at Jane.

Jane said, "Will."

He considered her. She was waiting for him to speak. He didn't know what to say to her. What a peculiar feeling it was that came over him. It was as if he knew her, and yet he had never met her; and he had heard so much about her that now, now that she stood next to him, so close that he could make out the strange astronomical specks in her eyes, he was unsure if she was real.

Will blurted: "Did you really make Troy pee his pants at assembly?"

Jane looked solemnly at him. She nodded.

"And you flipped a van with your mind?"

She nodded again, just as seriously.

“Wow.” Will digested this. The corner of his mouth pulled up, then the other. “That’s really cool,” he said.

Jane smiled. She said, “Thank you,” with a sort of care that suggested someone had taught her to do so very recently. A brief interlude of silence stretched then she said, “You’re really cool too.”

“Not really,” Will said. He ducked his head. “Actually, I’m kind of… I mean. Nobody thinks so.”

She said, “Mike.” Jane pointed to Dustin. Then to Lucas, who danced like a real dork with Max to Whitney Houston under the twinkling lights.

Will smiled, pleased. Jane, looking satisfied that she’d made her point, nodded again. They stood together right there through much of the song without speaking, and it was easy in a way it was rarely so with someone new to Will. He glanced at her in her blue dress and plain shoes. She swayed very slightly, clumsy at the knees, against the beat of the song. Her gaze was on Mike, now getting two cups of punch.

A pang twitched at Will’s heart. He swallowed and looked again to Jane. Her left foot twitched at the toe from one side to another.

“Thanks,” he said.

Her foot stilled; her knees, bent, straightened. She tipped her head.

“For, um, saving me,” he said. “And finding me. I guess you’ve had to save me a lot.”

Jane looked at him long enough that he began to slink into his shoulders. As he made to hunch, she reached out and took his arm by the sleeve, very near to his wrist, a delicate pinch with thumb and two fingers. She leaned forward, her head bent, and he was frightened for a moment that she might kiss his cheek, too. He was frightened first that he didn't want a girl to kiss him, a realization that struck with no warning, and frightened second because he thought it would be nice, like when he was little and Jonathan had

used to kiss his forehead before bed.

She said, “Friends help friends,” and leaned away. She let his sleeve go.

Will rubbed at his wrist, though she hadn’t touched his skin. The imagined warmth of her touch lingered.

“We’re friends?”

She thought. “Yes.”

“Okay,” said Will, and that made sense to him.

He wondered, without wondering it in words, if that might happen now and then, that you could meet someone and know that they were your friend in that moment of meeting, as if you had always known them even before you knew them, and you had just been waiting for them to come and find you. In kindergarten, when Mike had come over to him at the swings, he had felt some little thing like that. Now, here, with Jane, he felt it much larger, as if she were a sister he had lost long ago.

None of this he could put into words. He only felt it.

He smiled at her. Sometimes Troy had made fun of him for his smile, little-fancy-nancy-boy-smile. But Jane smiled the same smile back at him.

Mr Clarke put on Wham! and George Michael started singing about the boom-boom in his heart. Maybe Wham! wasn’t cool like David Bowie or the Velvet Underground, but the thought of George Michael crooning in his unbuttoned shirt made Will’s ears heat.

Jane lit up at the regular, cheery drum beat.

“Dance?”

“Yeah,” he said. “Let’s dance.”

She couldn’t dance very well but neither could he. All the dance moves he knew he had learned from Mom and it turned out nobody

danced like she did anymore. Still, Jane looked impressed that he could twist his hips one way while moving his elbows another way, and she even kind of laughed when Will momentarily shifted to the chicken dance.

Someone shoving by knocked their elbow in Will's back and said, "Ugh, freak."

Jane said, so very quietly only Will heard it, "Mouth breather," and the kid tripped on the smooth gymnasium floorboards. He went sprawling on his face.

Will looked at her with huge eyes, and she gave him a strange, face-crumpling wink that made a laugh bubble up out of Will's chest.

"Was that— Did you?"

She put a finger to her lips and said, "Secret."

He nodded furiously.

Yeah, he thought. She was cool. He didn't mind so much when she danced with Mike again later that night, and then again. That was OK. He was happy to see them happy together. He was happier when Dustin jumped on his back and yelled, "Get ready to do the hokey pokey, Byers!" and happier even than that when Lucas and Max joined them, then Mike and Jane, all of them in a circle with their arms around each other, sticking their right feet in under the bright and flickering lights, Dustin laughing in Will's ear and Will laughing, too, laughing until he could hardly breathe, all of them laughing together at the Snow Ball; while outside his mom shared cigarettes and parental advice with Hopper and invitations for Jane to visit at the Byers house, and the skies grew heavy with clouds: the first snow of the season come to cosily embrace Hawkins.

**Author's Note:**

Title from Wake Me Up Before You Go-Go by Wham!